

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
Chemtool Fire - Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region V

Subject: POLREP #4
Chemtool Fire
C5TM
Rockton, IL
Latitude: 42.4718011 Longitude: -89.0646749

To: Craig Thomas, EPA R5
Matt Villicana, USEPA
Lauren McCarrell, USEPA R5
Corey Peaslee, USEPA R5
Cheryl Newton, USEPA R5
Doug Ballotti, EPA R5
Tom Short, EPA R5
Tim Fischer, EPA R5
Sam Borries, U.S. EPA
Jason El-Zein, U.S. EPA
Jim Augustyn, U.S. EPA
Jaime Brown, U.S. EPA
Matt Mankowski, U.S. EPA
Mike Ribordy, U.S. EPA
John Glover, U.S. EPA
Kim Churchill, U.S. EPA
Carolyn Bohlen, U.S. EPA
HQ EOC, U.S. EPA
Records Center, U.S. EPA
Cordell Renner, Tetra Tech
Rachel Linduska, USEPA R5
Jeff Kelley, USEPA
James Justice, EPA Region 5
Rob Kondreck, USEPA R5
Jason Sewell, Region 05
Naeha Dixit, EPA R5
USCG Fund Center, USCG
Francisco Arcaute, U.S. EPA

From: Craig Thomas, On-Scene Coordinator

Date: 6/18/2021

Reporting Period: 6/17/21 - 6/18/21

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	C5TM / Z5TK	Contract Number:	
D.O. Number:		Action Memo Date:	
Response Authority:	CERCLA	Response Type:	Emergency
Response Lead:	PRP	Incident Category:	Removal Action
NPL Status:	Non NPL	Operable Unit:	
Mobilization Date:	6/14/2021	Start Date:	6/14/2021
Demob Date:		Completion Date:	
CERCLIS ID:		RCRIS ID:	
ERNS No.:		State Notification:	6/14/2021
FPN#:	E21510	Reimbursable Account #:	

1.1.1 Incident Category

Emergency Response

1.1.2 Site Description

The site is located at the Chemtool Incorporated facility in Rockton, Winnebago County, Illinois. At approximately 07:00 on June 14th, several fire departments from Illinois and Wisconsin responded to a large, six-alarm fire at the facility. Chemtool Incorporated manufactures greases, additives, and other fluids. The facility quickly became fully-involved in the fire and had several explosions.

1.1.2.1 Location

The site is located at 1165 Prairie Hill Road in Rockton, Winnebago County, Illinois.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

The facility housed several tanks of various greases, oils, additives, and other fluids, that have been or could be consumed in the fire. The smoke plume and runoff from the fire threatens to release contaminants into the atmosphere, as well as potentially discharging the contents of the tanks to the Rock River.

Over a million gallons of crude were stored on the facility. The facility is located approximately 700 feet from the Rock River. Given the large volume of oil in containers with compromised integrity, EPA believes there is substantial threat of discharge of oil to a navigable waterway.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

On-Scene Coordinators (OSC) Craig Thomas, Matt Villicana, Lauren McCarrell, and Corey Peaslee mobilized to the site on June 14, 2021. On June 14, 2021, at approximately 09:30 hours, EPA Region 5 Phone Duty Officer activated the Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) to respond to the incident. An additional OSC (Robert Kondreck) was deployed 6/16.

According to the Rockton Fire Chief and Potentially Responsible Party (PRP), the fire was discovered at approximately 0700 hours on June 14, 2021. The Rockton Fire Department, Rockford Fire Department, and several other Fire Departments from Illinois and Wisconsin Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) responded to the incident and are conducting fire suppression activities.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

The Rockton Fire Department along with several other fire departments from Illinois and Wisconsin Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) are on-site performing fire suppression activities. A mandatory evacuation was issued for all residents within a one-mile radius at approximately 0700 on June 14, 2021. The evacuation center was located at the Roscoe Middle School in Roscoe, IL, but closed on June 17th. At 1000 June 18th, the evacuation order was lifted.

USEPA has deployed three OSCs and twelve START contractors to provide air monitoring support for the fire.

USEPA consulted with Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to establish action levels for air monitoring data.

The Interagency Modelling and Atmospheric Assessment Center (IMAAC) was consulted by USEPA to develop plume models for the release. The models developed by IMAAC estimate the direction and extent of the plumes and are used as a guide tool to determine placement of air monitoring stations.

USEPA START contractors are performing community air monitoring and sampling for volatile organic compounds (VOCs), lower explosive limit (LEL), carbon monoxide (CO), hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), cyanates (MDI), oxygen (O₂), particulates, and metals. Air monitoring will continue as long as the fire is active.

Additionally, air sampling was conducted using Summa Canisters for VOCs. Three VOC samples were collected on 6/15, two VOCs samples were collected on 6/16 and one VOC sample collected for 6/17. Gilian pumps were used to collect samples for metals analysis on 6/15.

Illinois Civil Support Team (CST) members are also provided air monitoring support for the initial response by deploying AreaRAEs to monitor VOCs, LEL, CO, H₂S, and O₂. CST demobilized their air monitoring equipment on Thursday 6/17 late PM.

Tuesday morning the RP asked the Incident Commander to allow the use of firefighting foam (the only available firefighting foam onsite at that time). The IC made the decision to allow usage of the foam; at the time it was unknown that the only foam on site at the time contained PFAS. Upon observing pumping operations beginning, U.S. EPA and Illinois EPA requested a halt to those operations until additional boom was deployed on the Rock River and vac trucks were put on standby at several stations downriver to ensure that any foam other materials were contained. In the early afternoon, the non-fluorinated foam Vapor Suppressant Product (VSP) arrived onsite and any continued usage of foam will use VSP. Additional booms were placed in the Rock River in case of site runoff at 0900 on Wednesday 6/16.

During a site walk late evening 6/16 with USEPA and an RP contractor, evidence of stained soil and petroleum ponding was noticed outside of the interceptor trench. The interceptor trench was dry, and it was assumed that the ponding had occurred before installation of the interceptor trench. Evidence of degraded foam was found in several areas within the interceptor trench. A second interceptor trench was placed around the area affected by petroleum ponding, and the RP is using vac trucks and excavators to remove the affected soils.

On Thursday 6/17, between 1040 and 1055, a release of non-PFAS containing foam occurred due to backpressure in one of the fire hoses after turning off the pump and having a valve open. Illinois EPA spotted this release within that time and informed US EPA of the development. START contractors gathered water quality data and surface water samples by 1120, as booms were being deployed to contain the foam. The booms were fully in place by 1130. Additional surface water samples were taken by the RP's contractors. A vac truck was on-scene and removing the foam from the surface of the water by 1145. Once the foam is removed from the surface of the water, more samples will be taken by START contractors.

Thursday evening several stationary air monitors were placed nearby the Old Settlers Days festival site, with two contractors roving the site to monitor air quality. Due to interference from the wireless signals at the festival, the AreaRAEs were unable to be monitored remotely, however the DustTraks were able to maintain their signal to the host computer. The monitors were temporarily taken down due to the heavy rains Thursday night after the conclusion of festival activities. The monitoring will continue for the festival's duration, with manual data retrieval conducted by START contractors.

Friday morning, 6/18, excavation of the facility continued to garner access to hotspots on site.

On 6/18, U.S. EPA and START collected a surface water sample from a recovery ditch that was adjacent to Interceptor Trench 1 on the south side of the facility. The sample was collected because there was observed stained soil in and around the ditch.

The fire is still burning, with several flare-ups overnight; however, the smoke has greatly reduced in volume as firefighting efforts continue. At 1230 6/17, the RP's contractors on site began removal of debris to provide access to the hotspots of the remaining blaze.

2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

The RP has been identified as Chemtool Incorporated.

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>

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2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

USEPA START contractors will continue to provide 24-hour air monitoring support during the response while fire suppression activities are ongoing. Additional resources have been deployed for air monitoring during the Old Settlers Festival.

USEPA START contractors also remain prepared to monitor and collect samples from the Rock River, if sheening or any other evidence of a discharge is observed.

Debris cleanup the RP's contractors continues.

USEPA is preparing a contingency plan for potential bulk asbestos sampling, should any suspected asbestos-containing material be observed.

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

USEPA START Contractors will continue to provide 24-hour air monitoring support during the response while fire suppression activities are ongoing.

USEPA START contractors also remain prepared to monitor and collect samples from the Rock River if evidence of a discharge is observed.

2.2.2 Issues

A detection of HCN was detected above ATSDR screening values (above 1.0 ppm) via the CST air monitoring equipment overnight on 6/14 pm to 6/15 am. USEPA and the CST conducted further investigation of HCN overnight on 6/15 pm to 6/16 and preliminary evaluation of the data did not reveal any detections above the ATSDR screening value of 1.0 ppm.

2.3 Logistics Section

No information available at this time.

2.4 Finance Section

2.4.1 Narrative

On 6/16/2021, U.S. EPA requested an FPN (E21510) to address the substantial threat of discharge of oil to a navigable waterway. U.S. EPA began charging 75% to CERCLA and 25% to the FPN starting 6/16.

Estimated Costs *

	Budgeted	Total To Date	Remaining	% Remaining
Extramural Costs				
START	\$175,000.00	\$85,000.00	\$90,000.00	51.43%
Intramural Costs				
USEPA - Direct	\$25,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$13,000.00	52.00%
Total Site Costs	\$200,000.00	\$97,000.00	\$103,000.00	51.50%

* The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this report was written. The OSC does not necessarily receive specific figures on final payments made to any contractor(s). Other financial data which the OSC must rely upon may not be entirely up-to-date. The cost

accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

2.5 Other Command Staff

2.5.1 Safety Officer

The fire departments are providing a safety officer

2.5.2 Liaison Officer

EPA OSC is serving in this role

2.5.3 Information Officer

EPA has a Public Information Officer established for this response

3. Participating Entities

3.1 Unified Command

3.2 Cooperating Agencies

EPA Region 5

Illinois EPA

Illinois Emergency Management Agency

Illinois Civil Support Team

Illinois State Police

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System

Winnebago County Sherriff

Ogle County Sherriff

4. Personnel On Site

EPA - 5

START - 10

Illinois EPA - 5

Firefighters from multiple fire departments.

5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

6. Additional sources of information

6.1 Internet location of additional information/report

response.epa.gov/chemtoolfire

6.2 Reporting Schedule

It is anticipated that POLREPS will be provided at 24-hour intervals

7. Situational Reference Materials

response.epa.gov/chemtoolfire

